



SACRAMENTO STATE  
COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

# **Supervisory Skills Development**

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## **Managing Conflict**

Participant Guide



Revised 2/12/2007



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# **Purpose and Objectives**

## **Managing Conflict**

### **Purpose**

This module is designed to challenge each person to view conflict in a productive and proactive way. You will have an opportunity to consider a variety of conflict resolution skills and their application to the CDCR workplace.

### **Objectives**

- Use conflict as a tool for organizational and personal growth
- Identify sources of conflict
- Identify how and why conflict escalates
- Identify and adapt one's personal conflict management style
- Effectively use five conflict management strategies
- Break the Retaliatory Cycle of conflict



# CDCR Topical Threads

A significant component of this program is the relation to the values instilled by CDCR:

## **Alignment with Department Vision, Mission, and Goals**

In our fulfillment of roles, we support the organization in achieving its strategic goals by providing through example and practice that we communicate with each other with respect, resolve, and dedication to avoid or appropriately address conflict with the best practices and with an overall understanding community and agency expectation.

## **Community**

It takes courage, willingness, and persistence to approach conflict in a different way. When in community with others, the tendency is to follow familiar destructive patterns.

## **Rehabilitation**

Individuals need clear goals to change behavior. In order to restore the ability to return to a level of freedom and work, a framework needs to be established to foster an environment of growth and success.

## **Accountability**

The process of accepting responsibility for actions begins with each person. All within the agency, especially supervisors are encouraged to model the method. Demonstrating by example the value of trust, integrity, responsibility and follow through are important to setting the expectation and example of true accountability in word, action, and deed.

## **Matrix Communication**

One of CDCR's fundamental goals is to create a more coherent process of interaction that distances itself from previously prescribed command-and-control structure to evolve into a collaborative system of interdepartmental communication.

## **Coaching**

Coaching is a method of interacting with others to inspire a new way of thinking and create a level of competence that leads people to find meaning and contribute more to their organization and lives.



## **The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership**

1. **Model the Way:** Find your own voice, clarify your values, express yourself, set the example, build and affirm shared values, and align actions with values.
2. **Inspire a Shared Vision:** Envision the future, differentiate yourself as a leader by being forward-looking, understand the importance of having a vision, enlist others, develop a shared sense of destiny, and give life to a vision.
3. **Challenge the Process:** Search for opportunities, seize the initiative, make challenge meaningful, innovate and create, experiment and take risks, initiate incremental steps and small wins, and learn from mistakes.
4. **Enabling Others to Act:** Foster collaboration, create a climate of trust, facilitate positive interdependence, strengthen others, generate power all around, ensure self-leadership, provide choice, and foster accountability.
5. **Encourage the Heart:** Recognize contributions, focus on clear standards, expect the best, pay attention, personalize recognition, celebrate the values and victories, create a spirit of community, and create a story.

**!** *Which thread(s) can lend to the focus of productively resolving conflict? Why?*



# Conflict Defined

We know what conflict feels and looks like. The perception (or reality) of being wronged by another can cause disappointment, disillusionment, and anger. *When one person perceives that their interests are being negatively affected by another party then that's conflict.*

Other definitions:

- A clash
- Open, often prolonged fighting
- The process in which one party perceives that its interests are being negatively affected by another party

Conflict happens naturally, yet conflict resolution doesn't. The risk that you and others prepare for in dealing with the conflict is greater than the actual risk in resolving the conflict. Yet, avoiding conflict or the resolution of that conflict will result in greater costs to the organization.



## Danger or Opportunity?

Danger 衝突 Opportunity

If you view conflict as **dangerous**, **abnormal** or **unhealthy** then you will most likely *deny its existence, avoid it at all costs, and be suspicious* of any attempt to resolve it.

If, however, you view conflict as an **opportunity** to *promote communication, increase understanding* and to *bring about positive and creative change* then you will probably be eager to learn and use conflict resolution skills.

There is no way to address conflict without recognizing the emotions that are always present and can impact the direction conflict takes. When faced with moments where rationale and strong negotiation skills are foundational, we can sometimes be blinded by frustration, distress, and anger.

As CDCR continues to evolve as an effective organization; integration of enhanced skills in facilitation and communication can lessen the need for event-focused interventions to address conflict and disputes.

! *How does this approach to conflict support CDCR's Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals?*





# Causes of Conflict

*A variety of issues can impact the workplace:*

- A Youth Correctional Counselor regularly has intense, angry confrontations with a colleague on their shift and they are required to work together.
- A Nurse Practitioner who struggles with *alcoholism* is habitually late which causes other staff to adjust their schedules.
- A Resource Specialist *harasses* his assistant by making explicit comments about her physical appearance and shares inappropriate sexual jokes during staff meetings.

Other situations that can cause conflicts are:

- Personality conflicts
- Inconsistent leadership
- Gossip
- Staff feels unappreciated and disrespected
- Interpersonal struggles
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## Sources of Conflict

- Short-term pressures versus long-term goals
- Differing perceptions, values, cultural norms
- Ambiguous jurisdictions
- Lack of clarity
- Competition for limited resources
- Needs such as power, status, ego, recognition, self-worth
- Parochial and regional attitudes
- Change - some not wanting to let go of the old; others moving too quickly
- Others?

## Types of Conflict

### **Constructive conflicts:**

- Are focused on interests rather than needs
- Can be dealt with honestly and openly
- Can help a relationship develop
- Focus on flexible methods for solving disputes
- Assist both parties achieve their objectives

### **Destructive conflicts:**

- Center on people's needs rather than interests or issues of fact
- Involve saving face and preserving power
- Attack relationships
- Focus on personalities, not action or behaviors
- Concentrate on quick fix, short-term solutions
- Tend to repeat themselves



# The Conflict Continuum

Different kinds of conflict are regulated by different types of rules, because conflicts can be so different that different approaches apply. There are times when a healthy conflict escalate and ceases to be constructive. Below are three degrees of a conflict continuum.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Degree: Problem Solving

Stable feelings are present with all involved parties. It's hard at times, but people are willing to work together and do what they can to reach common goals.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree: Power Plays, Psychological Warfare

Manipulation is definitely present which makes basic the most basic things difficult. There are power struggles, hidden agendas, and tons of drama. Everything feels harder than it needs to be.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree: Blind Behavior

Conflicts take on a life of their own and in spite of efforts to make things better things continue to go down a downward spiral (or sinking like you're in quicksand). People get stuck and any movement is only deeper and deeper into self-defeating loops and ignoring viable solutions. It's chronic, exhausting, and feels like there is no end.

**!** *Pick any of the topical threads listed on pages 2 and 3. In what ways do second- and third-degree conflicts run counter to supporting your selected topical thread?*



# Conflict Continuum: Characteristics & Approaches

## First Degree

- People feel free to speak and listen
- Can exchange ideas and manage different viewpoints even if they disagree
- Actions and reactions are appropriate

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*Parties view their conflict as a problem to be solved **mutually***

*Each person participates actively in the resolution and makes an effort and commitment to find answers which are fair*

## Second Degree

- Actions seemingly irrational and restless
- Inappropriate behavior
- Invasion of boundaries

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*Confront the person about his/her behavior directly.*

*Set firm boundaries. Explain why certain actions and behaviors are no longer tolerable, and detail what you want to see happen in the future and what the consequences will be if they chose to continue their behavior.*

## Third Degree

- Blind to own behavior
- Power without checks and balances
- Missing boundaries

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*Use authority signals. Maintain an upright posture, impassive expression, and alert eyes.*

*Be careful about using force in this range.*

*Use Bevel's Principle of Participation*



# Bevel's Principles of Participation

Reverend James Bevel was part of the legacy of the civil rights campaigns in the Deep South. Unarmed people went up against entrenched and violent racists and although there was great pain and destruction, his methodology for approach was successful.

This approach is similar to tactical aikido. You don't try to stop your opponent, but you step out of the way and keep them moving. You don't oppose them, you move in sync.

1. We share common interests – *Find the common thread where both parties can benefit.*
2. We share common outcomes – *Success may be a common goal.*
3. The other person has a talent for furthering his or her own interest and mine. – *What value does each person bring to the table?*

**!** *How does Bevel's approach align with CDCR values and principles? What similarities do you see?*



## Fight or Flight

When faced with a stressful situation our bodies respond in a variety of physical and psychological ways.

- Psychological responses – Based on triggers (whether real or imagined) bodies release chemical actions to prepare us for flight or fight.
- Physical reactions – rapid heart rate, dilated pupils, increased respiratory rate, endorphins released into blood stream

What do you notice when you become angry or stressed? (physical changes):

•	•
•	•
•	•

Most people are familiar with the *Fight or Flight* process, however there is a deeper concept that is important to recognize. It is called *flooding*.



# Flooding

Our brain processes differently when we are stressed or angry. The problem is not limited to a character change, but a chemical one. The introduction of *flooding* was the subject of research introduced by Dr. John Gottman. *Flooding is an adrenaline overload that shorts out most of the higher parts of the brain and leaves many acting irrational, defensive, and quarrelsome.* People who are flooding have:

- Difficulty processing new information
- Inability to recognize healthy options
- Problems with listening; and
- Challenges with productive communication.

**If you don't manage flooding properly, it will undermine every other useful skill you own.**

## Scenario:

Andrea works in a very fast-paced and detailed work department. She maintains contact with outside vendors and internal clients requiring document control services. She is friendly, soft-spoken, respectful and supportive of her team members. Andrea's boss, Debbie, is an abrasive supervisor who regularly uses her power to hurt, demean, and take advantage of others. It is commonplace for the boss to use foul language or otherwise use aggressive and manipulative methods to undermine Andrea's work. She will openly humiliate Andrea in front of others and reject work submitted where there are no errors. Although Andrea becomes frequently frustrated and angry, she does not feel she is in a position to protect herself because of her boss's relationship with powerful people in the company. As a result, when Andrea is confronted, she often feels overwhelmed:

*"I feel my heart racing and my face gets flushed. My stomach starts to cramp and I start to feel ill. I want to respond to her, but I fumble over my words which gives additional fuel for her insults. As my anger increases, I hear ringing in my ears and I want to escape."*



## Open Flooding

Physical symptoms can be easy to see and feel. Your heart rate goes up, your breathing increases, and your head can start pounding. Sometimes you might feel flushed; you might clench your teeth or your fists also. Raised voices and yelling are common and the ability to process your words while trying to express them can become difficult.

## Silent Flooding

People who silently flood show little outward symptoms. It appears as if they are unaffected by the situation which is untrue. Individuals who outwardly flood may want to provoke a response. The problem with this approach is that the silent flooder will not be able to appropriately respond until he or she has the ability to calm down and process the situation without pressure.

## It's Contagious

As a rule, if someone is flooding, check to see if you are too.

- Focus on yourself first – Be aware of your physical changes.
  - ☐ What physical symptoms am I feeling? (head throbbing, dry mouth)
- Check for raw emotion
  - ☐ Do you feel trapped, furious, or provoked?
- Flooding people are highly reactive.
  - ☐ Take care not to make sudden moves as they may react inappropriately.

**!** *How can being aware of flooding help you as a supervisor to Model the Way?*





# You Can't Stop the Waves, but You Can Learn to Surf

Once flooding gets started it can be easy to stay irrational and angry. Building awareness strategies will assist in personal reflection and reverse physical and mental flooding symptoms.

- Work large muscles – Large muscle action triggers change that washes out flooding and clears the mind.
- Breathe – Since one of the signs of flooding is shallow breathing, to deliberately reverse the symptoms, force yourself to take .deep, slow breaths.
- Do not counter attack – It increases the level of conflict and it is counterproductive.
- Take care not to make rash decisions – Wait until you have calmed down
- Focus on specifics – list facts and read them back to keep your mind focused.
- Take a break! – If you can't break free from flooding, stop arguing. State that you would like to continue talking another time when you are calmer.

**!** *What effect does appropriate anger management have on your ability to support CDCR's charter to successfully rehabilitate offenders?*



# Flooding Exercise

## Directions:

Working on your own, take a few moments to recall two conflict situations. Share one where you were the observer and the other as a participant. List physical and mental symptoms seen and felt. Create at least two healthy changes that could reverse the flooding process.

### *Situation One: (Observer)*

Physical Symptoms	Mental symptoms

### *Situation Two: (Participant)*

Physical Symptoms	Mental symptoms

## Reversal options:

### *Situation One:*


### *Situation Two:*




## Benefits and Consequences

Disputes can be a product of conflict although not every conflict becomes a dispute. The focus thereby becomes how to uncover hidden issues and concerns before they blossom into a conflict.

Approaches traditionally have been reactive; however in forward-moving and leading edge agencies such as CDCR, addressing communication concerns is primary in alleviating the impact of conflict in personal and professional environments.

Uncovering conflict can be viewed as a positive element because:

- It assists in determining issues that need to be resolved;
- It can uncover communication avenues that need to be improved; and
- Stakeholders (employees, managers, and staff) can learn to acknowledge and appreciate others differences.

Unresolved and poorly managed conflict can create significant workplace problems such as:

- Reduced productivity
- Increased absenteeism; and
- Diminished employee morale.

Overall the goal is to avoid reacting and become proactive in developing and maintaining productive and professional relationships in the workplace. Although conflict is inevitable; it can be handled strategically to avoid becoming victims of circumstances or others behavior.

**!** *How does this information relate to the Five Practices and Trust?*



## Levels of Conflict

Many people do not perceive that a conflict exists or is significant unless there is an overt action or situation. It is important to increase one's level of awareness because there are many clues available which afford the opportunity to constructively address conflicts as they arise.



The levels of conflict vary from person to person and within organizations. There is no set progression of conflict. That is, there are no cookie-cutter steps to describe how conflict escalates. Increased awareness of emotional shifts in communication and action can assist you to intervene before a heightened or potentially explosive event takes place.

To address perceived levels of conflict, caring, empathy, and open ended questions need to be implemented to uncover the source of the discord. Effective questioning can uncover the other person's perspectives and motivators.

Sample questions to gather information and show respect:

- What's important to you about that?
- What do you mean by "inconsiderate"?
- How did you arrive at that conclusion?
- When and where does this impact you the most?

Replacing your judgment with curiosity lessens defensiveness and creates opportunities to resolve difficult situations.



# Dealing with Mindchatter

## Directions:

- Draw a line across the middle of your paper.
- Spend three minutes focusing on all the chatter that's running through your mind.
- Above the line on your paper, record "to do" chatter.
- Below the line, record "nuisance" chatter.
- Tear the paper in half at the line.
- Save the top half.
- Gleefully destroy the bottom half.
- Now we're ready to move on.



# Responses to Conflict

Before addressing appropriate responses to conflict, it is important to acknowledge a powerful emotion, anger that is demonstrated in a variety of ways.

*Anger is a person's learned internal experience that responds or reacts to others' adverse behavior.* Anger is a secondary emotion. Although it may appear that it is the primary feeling, it is actually based on emotions such as fear, frustration, hurt, and disrespect.

Some people who have learned to act in an angry way may not realize that they have an anger problem. From their perspective, they are just acting "normally" because it's how they grew up and how their families commonly interacted.

A pattern of behavior that has become more exposed in the workplace is that of bullying. People who find that others show respect (albeit false) or demonstrate fear towards them from their aggressive behavior continue it as a method of interacting with others.

Methods of addressing conflict depend on:

- The situation,
- The individuals involved, and
- The degree of conflict.



# Conflict Escalation

Conflict escalation is *an increase in the intensity of a conflict and in the severity of tactics used in pursuing it.*

It is driven by changes within each of the parties, new patterns of interaction between them, and the involvement of new parties in the struggle.

The problem increases when more people become involved and parties begin to make bigger and stronger threats and impose harsher negative sanctions.

When faced with conflicts that exhibit radically different attitudes, values, and behaviors, people can feel criticized, demeaned, or threatened. Threats to identity, positions, and values tend to arouse feelings of anger and fear which can further fuel conflict escalation.

## Stage One

- Conflict seen as part of normal, everyday life.
- Can only be resolved with great care and mutual empathy.
- People look for objective solutions a cooperative manner.
- If a solution is not found, because one of the parties sticks to their point of view, the conflict escalates.

## Stage Two:

- Parties fluctuate between cooperation and competition.
- They have common interests, but their own wishes become more important.
- Each party does everything possible to show no weakness.
- The temptation to leave the field of argument increases until the conflict escalates because of some action taken by one of the parties.

## Stage Three:

- Parties each fear that the grounds for a common solution are lost.
- Interaction becomes hostile
- All logic is focused on action, replacing fruitless and nerve-wracking discussions.
- Power becomes important as empathy disappears.



## Stage Four:

- One is aware of the other's perspectives, but is no longer capable of considering the other's thoughts, feelings, and situation.
- Both sides feel forced into roles from which they see no escape
- Escalation results when one side commits some action that is felt by the opposite side as a loss of face.

## Stage Five:

- Sacred values, convictions, and superior moral obligations are at stake.
- By threatening and creating fear, both parties strive toward total control.
- To remain credible and to restrain the enemy from an act of force, the threatened party feels compelled to commit acts of force itself.
- This, in turn, proves to the threatening party the aggressive nature of the threatened person and provokes counterforce and further escalation.
- This process continues until the parties reach financial or physical exhaustion

**!** *Why is this material important in the context of your supporting the topical threads as a supervisor at CDCR?*





# Self Talk

Self talk is the internal dialog we have in our heads. Often, we may be unaware of how it colors our perception of events, however it is important to turn off our talking, check our assumptions that contribute to the self-talk, and be present in the moment of conflict and listen to the other party.

**Negative** self talk contributes to the escalation and fuels the fire of conflict because the statements are often exaggerated and distorted. In order to redirect the downward spiral of conflict, we need to replace destructive statements with positive ones.

**Modifying** self talk involves a long-term commitment that must be acted upon every day. It takes time, energy, and dedication to succeed at eliminating anger-provoking thoughts, but it can be done.

- Be aware of the talk in your head. What are you telling yourself about the current situation? If it is negative, make a conscious effort to change your statements.
- Take responsibility for your part in the conflict and recognize you don't have to be a victim to others. You can control your own actions and no one can "make you" feel angry or control your emotions.
- When you are calm, identify trigger situations. These situations and behaviors contribute to your angry reactions. For example, you might find that you become upset when someone appears condescending or when someone raises his or her voice at you.
- Plan alternative ways to respond to these tough situations by writing out positive self-talk statements to repeat when these situations occur.



# Transforming Negative Self Talk

## Directions:

- Recall a recent conflict you have experienced. Feel yourself in that moment and use the space below to write out as many of your own negative self talk statements.
- Then write down at least as many modifying self talk statements. Note that the each modifying statement doesn't have to correspond as the direct opposite of each negative statement. Use the other side of this sheet if you need to.

## Examples of negative internal statements:

- I hate dealing with *these people*.
- John is out to get me.
- I can't stand being in this position *one more minute!*

## Examples of positive internal statements:

- I can control my reactions.
- Perhaps John and I need to communicate more effectively. I'm going to do my part to make that happen.
- This is a tough situation, but *I can handle it*.



# Steps for dealing with anger

Anger is not the problem. It's what one **does** with feelings of anger.

1. Acknowledge the deeper issue and/or emotion.
2. Employ empathetic listening skills.
3. Respond to the issue rather than attacking the person.
4. Be open to resolving the issue.
5. Look forward and learn from the past.
6. Model appropriate anger responses.

To process angry feelings, identify the *core emotion first*. It can be challenging because anger usually masks core feelings. Acknowledging core emotions can create feelings of vulnerability, however addressing those feelings is more effective than holding up a shield of anger.

## Some identifiable feelings:

Distrust  
Worry  
Fear  
Confusion



# Anger Styles

## Exploder

- When tensions build, the person “explodes”
- Episodes may include, yelling and violent behavior.

## Triangulator

- A passive-aggressive style
- Brings in a third person to direct anger at someone else

## Blamer

- Shifts focus of problem onto another person
- Takes no personal responsibility for the conflict

## Withdrawer

- Pulls away from issues
- Often hopes the issue will simply go away

## Problem Solver

- Listens to concerns
- Appropriately communicates to achieve a workable outcome



## Using “I” Statements

“I” statements are a method of communicating a problem to another person without using blame language. Conversely, “you” statements commonly address only the other person or the perceived issue.

For example: "You didn't finish the financial report on time!" While that statement may be true, hearing it phrased in it that way will likely cause the listener to get defensive and begin to argue. For instance, the listener might reply, "I couldn't because the deadline was unreasonable!" or "You are always pestering me. I'd get more done if you'd just leave me alone!"

Another approach to the same problem is using an "I" statement." For example, the worker could say, "I really am getting backed up on my work since I don't have the financial report yet." The co-worker's response to this statement is likely to be more conciliatory. For example, she might respond, "I know. I'm sorry. I'll finish it up today and try harder to meet my deadlines. I had a lot of things piling up at once this week, but I'll get it to you as quickly as I can."

While this doesn't completely solve the problem, it retains the good working relationship between the two people, and is more likely to generate more cooperative interactions in the future than the accusatory, "you message" approach. “I” statements require us to take accountability and own our feelings.

## Framework for “I” statements:

**When you....**

**I feel...**

**Because...**

*When you yelled at me about the financial report, I felt frustrated because I try hard to meet my deadlines because I have many responsibilities and I care about doing a good job.*

**Be careful** that your “I” statements are not really disguised as blame or “you” statements.



## “I” Statement Exercise

**Directions:** Using the following format, develop an „I-Statement’ for each of the three scenarios listed:

- I felt/feel (fill in the emotion)
  - ...when you said/did (give a specific example)’
  - I would like you to/would have liked you (give some specific action).
- 
1. You had patiently waited for an opportunity to speak during a meeting that is critical to a project that you are working on. You finally got the floor, but before you had a chance to say all of the things that you felt were important for the group to know about the project, the leader of the meeting cut you off and adjourned the meeting. Before you could respond, everyone was leaving.

*Your “I” statement to the meeting leader would be:*

I felt/feel ...

when you...

I would like you to/or would have liked you to have...



## **“I” Statement Exercise (cont’d)**

2. For several months you have been getting incorrect data from an associate. In the past, you have just corrected the information and not said anything because it was a sporadic request and you felt it just wasn’t worth the effort to say anything about it. Now you are having to request the data on a regular basis and you do not have time to check all of the work.

*Your “I” statement to your associate is:*

I feel/felt...

when you...

I would like you to/or would have liked you to have...



## **“I” Statement Exercise (cont’d)**

3. Your manager, who has always been very supportive and has helped you as you were learning your job, is having difficulty letting you operate on your own. He/she has just invited some other individuals to get involved in a project that you are heading without consulting with you in advance. While you think their input may be valuable, you would have liked to have had some input into the decision. You are also concerned that this pattern of hyper-managing your projects will become a pattern.

*Your “I” statement to your boss is:*

I feel/felt...

when you...

I would like you to/would have liked you to have...



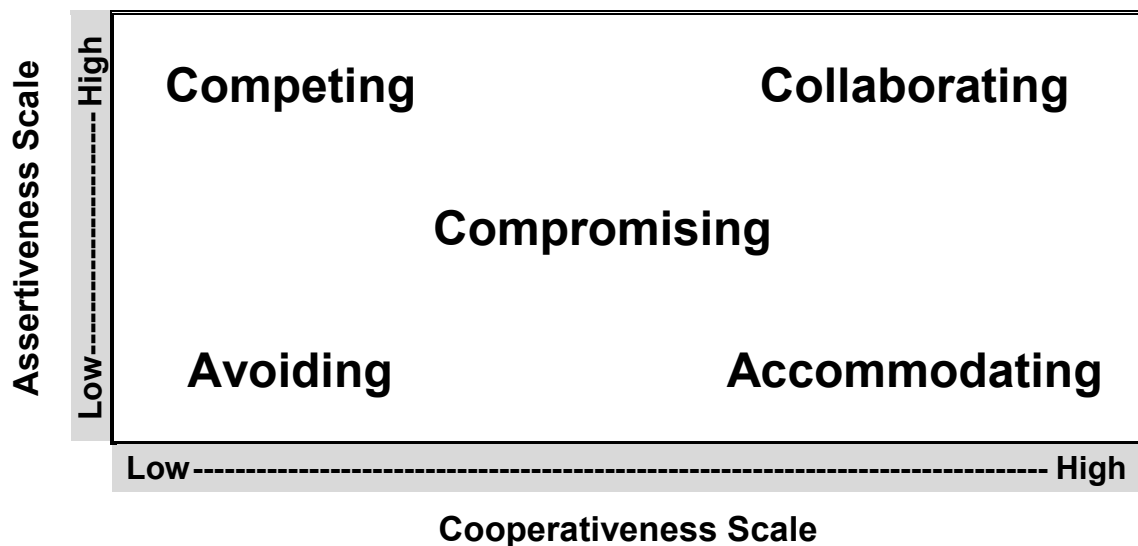


# Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

A commonly used tool which describes 5 typical conflict responses is the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument.

- **Competing:** High assertiveness and low cooperativeness. The goal is to "win".
- **Avoiding:** Low assertiveness and low cooperativeness. The goal is to "delay".
- **Compromising:** Moderate assertiveness and moderate cooperativeness. The goal is to "find a middle ground".
- **Collaborating:** High assertiveness and high cooperativeness. The goal is to "find a win-win situation".
- **Accommodating:** Low assertiveness and high cooperativeness. The goal is to "yield".

It is typical that in difficult situations, individuals react instead of respond. A large part of reaction is developed through our internal self-talk and dialog about our perceptions.





# Recognizing and Using Conflict Styles

## Competing/Dominating:

“My way or the highway.”

- Plus: Stands up for rights
- Minus: Power-oriented, argumentative
- Use when:
  - ☐ Quick, decisive action is vital
  - ☐ Implementing unpopular actions
  - ☐ The issue is vital to company's welfare
  - ☐ Protecting yourself against being bullied

## Accommodating/Obliging:

“It would be my pleasure.”

- Plus: Selfless generosity, obedience, yielding
- Minus: Neglects own concerns, self-sacrificing
- Use when:
  - ☐ You're wrong
  - ☐ Building social credits
  - ☐ Continued competition would hurt your cause
  - ☐ Preserving harmony is especially important

## Withdrawing/Avoiding:

“I'll think about it tomorrow.”

- Plus: Diplomatically side-steps or postpones issues
- Minus: Does not address conflict
- Use when:
  - ☐ Issues are truly trivial
  - ☐ There is no chance of satisfying your concerns
  - ☐ Damage from conflict outweighs benefits
  - ☐ Need to let people cool down
  - ☐ Need to gather more information



## Recognizing and Using Conflict Styles (cont'd)

### Compromising:

“Let’s make a deal.”

- Plus: Equal power
- Minus: Partially satisfying solution
- Use when:
  - ☐ Winning is not worth down side of risk
  - ☐ Temporary settlements, quick solutions needed
  - ☐ A back-up for failed collaboration and competition efforts is needed

### Collaborating/Integrating

“Two heads are better than one.”

- Plus: Mutual gains, satisfying for all
- Minus: May be time consuming
- Use when:
  - ☐ Learning
  - ☐ Merging insights or finding integrative solutions
  - ☐ Gaining commitment
  - ☐ Working through difficult interpersonal issues



## Assessment Exercise

**This questionnaire is intended to help you clarify the way you approach and attempt to resolve conflict. Indicate that statement with which you agree by circling "Yes."**

1. Sometimes I give others what they want,  
even when I would rather not. ----- Yes
4. If there is a disagreement I like to win. ----- Yes
5. It is better to arrive at an agreement where everybody is satisfied  
rather than stick it out to get the most advantage for myself. ----- Yes
6. Often it is best to follow other people's ideas. ----- Yes
7. Usually I am single-minded in achieving my aims. ----- Yes
8. I prefer not to spend much time with individuals  
who voice strong opinions. ----- Yes
9. When I have made up my mind I try hard to convince others. ----- Yes
10. I like to be very open and encourage others to be the same. ----- Yes
11. In a dispute both sides need to make significant concessions. ----- Yes
12. It is often better to accept another's viewpoint  
rather than antagonize them. ----- Yes
13. It is better to explore agreement rather than disagreement. ----- Yes
14. If there is a problem I like both sides to put their cards on the table. ----- Yes
15. I usually prefer to share the cake rather than try to get it all. ----- Yes
16. Differences of opinion don't often matter a great deal. ----- Yes
17. I prefer to stick with my own ideas rather than enter a long discussion. -- Yes

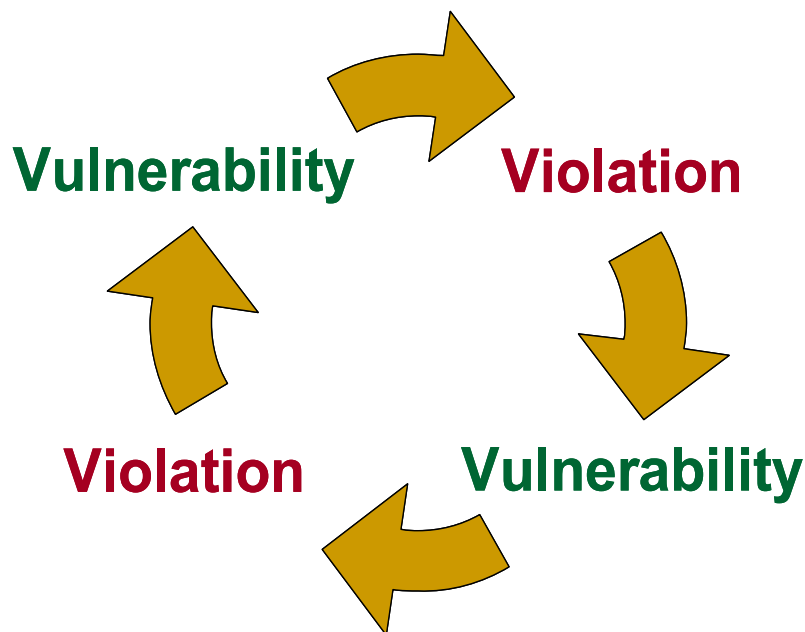


## The Retaliatory Cycle of Conflict

Anger prompts a punishing or retaliatory response because the likelihood of mutually beneficial outcomes is limited due to the lack of regard for others interests.

The idea that we should treat people as they deserve is commonly accepted. There is a dangerous tendency to slip from retributive justice to an emphasis on revenge. Vengeance is a matter of retaliation, of getting even with those who have hurt us. It can also serve to teach wrongdoers how it feels to be treated in certain ways. Like retribution, revenge is a response to wrongs committed against innocent victims and reflects the proportionality of the scales of justice.

But revenge focuses on the personal hurt involved and typically involves anger, hatred, bitterness, and resentment. Such emotions are potentially quite destructive. Because these intense feelings often lead people to over-react, resulting punishments can be excessive and cause further antagonism.





# How to Break The Cycle

De-escalation tends to proceed slowly and requires much effort. It is important to treat the person you are addressing respectfully, even if you dislike that person. Exhibiting disrespect is almost never helpful, as it immediately places the listener in an adversarial and probably hostile frame of mind, and it encourages him or her to disregard or dispute anything that is said. This does not mean that you have to agree with everyone and hide any opposition you hold to their attitudes, beliefs, values, or positions. It simply means that you should state your differences in a way that does not belittle theirs.

## ■ Before addressing the conflict:

- ☐ Make sure there is a real problem.
- ☐ Try to focus on the real issue, not the person or actions or their "position."
- ☐ Be prepared to work to a mutually agreeable solution.
- ☐ Remember that it's OK to disagree.
- ☐ Keep things in perspective; focus on the long term results.

## ■ While working out the conflict:

- ☐ Look for win-win situations.
- ☐ Try to put yourself in their shoes.
- ☐ Be willing to own part of the problem
- ☐ Remember that talking about your feelings is more productive than acting them out.
- ☐ Identify a common goal and stick to it.
- ☐ Keep trying to come to a satisfactory solution for both parties.
- ☐ Use the guidelines for giving feedback.
- ☐ Summarize with the other party and agree to next steps at the end of discussion.



# Workplace Outcomes

What outcomes do you desire from your workplace in terms of resolving conflict?

In order to answer this question, consider and answer the following statements:

- The issue, put concisely, is...

*Get everyone's unique viewpoint.*

- This is significant because...

*Identifying the consequences draws attention to the importance of resolving the issue and helps draw conflict deniers and avoiders into a process they would otherwise never confront.*

- About this situation, I personally feel...

*Giving personal feelings a direct voice brings them out into the open. That's much healthier than keeping them repressed – they'll eventually explode out anyway.*

- My part in creating this situation was...

*Everyone played a part in the situation. Some instigated. Some allowed themselves to get drawn in. Some helped to perpetuate it by pretending not to see a problem. Some were oblivious – not paying adequate attention. Everyone contributed to the problem somewhere between 1 and 99 percent.*

- What I'd like to see as the outcome...

*Use the power of visualizing a positive end state to generate commitment and energy to the process of getting past this conflict and onto a better future.*

- As a group, we need to...

*All groups function in accord with norms and values. Make yours both positive and explicit so that people know the expectations and commit to abiding by them.*

- I'm personally willing to...

*Everyone must be part of the solution. When each individual makes a commitment to their group peers to be personally accountable, the group likely will make real and sustained progress.*



## Additional Resources

### Books

- *Boundaries* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend
- *The Adversity Quotient* by Paul G. Stoltz
- *Business: The Ultimate Resource* by Don Blohowiak
- *Leading through Conflict* by Mark Gerzon
- *Straight Talk* by Eric F. Douglas
- *Conflict Unraveled* by Andra Medea
- *Conflict Escalation: A Five Phase Model* by Douglas Noll

### On the Web

- **<http://conflict.colorado.edu/>**  
Comprehensive guide and gateway for the *University of Colorado*, Conflict Research Consortium
- **<http://www.beyondintractability.org/>**  
Website with a variety of articles regarding conflict
- **<http://www.canr.uconn.edu/ces/child/newsarticles/SAC721.html>**  
An excellent brief article with additional references that discusses conflict as danger or opportunity